

in this regard. All State Governments and concerned agencies of the Central Government have been suitably alerted and sensitised to keep a close watch on the situation.

Railway Land T119

3107. KUMARI FRIDA TOPNO : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways had acquired thousands of acres of Tribal lands at Bondamunda for the construction of Railway Yards whereas hundreds of acres land now remain unused or are being encroached;

(b) if so, the number of proposals before the Government to utilise this surplus land by the Railways; and

(c) if not, whether this land is going to be returned to the original owners?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The Railway acquired about 3421.5 acres of land. Of this, 841 acres of land is lying unused of which about 2 acres of land has been encroached upon.

(b) There are a number of proposals before the Government for the utilisation of this railway land.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Developmental Projects in Forest Area T120

3108. SHRI ANANT KUMAR HEGDE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the deforestation in the country particularly in Karnataka caused due to setting up of development projects and other reasons, whereas these projects could have been set up in the plains;

(b) whether the Government have also received reports regarding illegal mining in the forest areas of the country particularly in Karnataka;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government to save the forests from the environmental viewpoint?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) As per the State of Forest Report, 1993, the forest cover in Karnataka has shown a marginal increase of 144 sq.km over 1991 assessment. So far as diversion of forest land for none forestry purposes is concerned, prior approval of Central Government is required under Forest (Conservation)

Act, 1980. Such developmental projects are located in hilly as well as in plain regions depending on the requirement of the site. Permission for such diversion is accorded after careful examination of all relevant information including likely effects of such diversion on environment, flora and fauna and after satisfying that no alternative land is available for the project and the demand for the forest land is bare minimum.

(b) Yes, Sir. •

(c) Does not arise.

(d) One of the important step taken by the Central Government to check diversion of forest land in the country has been enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act in 1980. Further, while permitting diversion of forest land under the Forest (Conservations) Act, 1980, suitable safeguards including compensatory afforestation and for mining cases the condition of reclamation of area is stipulated to compensate for diversion of forest land.

Funds for Flood Relief T124

3109. SHRI O.P. JINDAL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Haryana Government has submitted any detailed report regarding its flood-hit areas to the Union Government and requested to provide special financial assistance;

(b) if so, whether the Government have agreed to the request and provide a special financial assistance to the State Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the amount of said assistance is very meagre; and

(e) if so, whether it is proposed to increase the amount?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The Government of Haryana had submitted a Memorandum seeking financial assistance of Rs. 43.36 crores for relief and rehabilitation measures in the wake of the recent floods.

(b) to (e). A Central Team visited the flood affected areas. Government of India have released the entire Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 1996-97 amounting to Rs. 18.79 crores to the State Government.

Fruit Trees in Forests T122

3110. SHRI LALIT ORAON : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to grow fruit